TRANSMISSIONS: THE JOURNAL OF FILM AND MEDIA STUDIES 2016, VOL.1, NO. 2, PP. 8-22.

Sebastian Jagielski
Jagiellonian University

"Let everybody love me". The transnational body of Elżbieta Czyżewska[1]

Abstract

The ways to create a star personality in the Polish People's Republic are closer to the strategy of creating stars in the Soviet cinema, where the star had to function as an power engine, as an incentive to action, than to the Hollywood system (*star system*). It is well illustrated by the career of Elżbieta Czyżewska: not only was she the most fascinating actress of her generation but she was also quickly transformed into a star. Czyżewska's body used as a screen on which first the (socialist) desires and then (socialist) fears were projected, was placed – almost from the beginning of her career – in transnational contexts. She crossed borders not only on the screen: in 1965 Czyżewska married *The New York Times* correspondent, David Halberstam, and left for New York, or rather was forced to leave. The star's previously ideal body suddenly appeared to be – not for "strangers" but for "us," not outside the national community but inside it – a transgressive (since openly transnational) anti-body. This article explores (1) the phenomenon of a star in the Polish People's Republic ("socialist star system"), (2) transgressions of Czyżewska in the West, (3) and, above all, their Polish reception.

Key words: Polish cinema, Elżbieta Czyżewska, communism, transnational, stardom, body, affect

[1] The paper was delivered during the international conference Polish cinema as a transnational cinema organised by the Department of the History of Polish Cinema at the Institute of Audiovisual Arts of Jagiellonian University (Kraków, 26-28 November 2015). The article in its

Introduction

In the state-owned film industry of communist Poland, expressing the dominating ideology was more important than fulfilment of audiences' expectations. It was not pleasure that was important, but the educational goal; not entertainment but social involvement. Hence, it comes as no surprise that the authorities in the Polish People's Republic were not interested in the creation of stars.[2] Even more so, since in the official discourse such a phenomenon was associated with the "degenerated" bourgeois West. Hence, there was no place for Hollywood-style stars, but there was for socialist ones (especially in the 60s, when the authorities decided to use the persuasive power of film genres for their own purposes). Their image was not supposed to be—as in the Hollywood "star system"—based on the relation to the market (*star system* as the sale of goods), but—as in the Soviet Union—on the relation to communist ideology. It was the stars (and film genres) that proved at the time to be the most effective carrier of ideology, especially as the public longed for somebody exceptional and unique. The socialist stars—even though just like Western ones, they shaped the behaviour of Poles, told them how to dress, behave and be—did not exist in the "blue firmament", but "fraternised" with people, ate at milk bars, and met people in village clubs.[3]

Elżbieta Czyżewska fulfilled these contradictory expectations of the public and authorities with bravado. Not only was she the most fascinating actress of her generation ("she was visible. (…)", Andrzej Kostenko used to say, "in our [actors' – SJ] environment one could feel her peculiarity"[4]), but she was also quickly transformed into a star ("the only actress after the war who in such a short time achieved so much"[5], said Leon Łochowski). In the years 1960-1966, she never left the set, appearing in a few films per year and performing in theatre and TV. Everybody wanted to work with her: directors of the auteur (Wojciech J. Has, Tadeusz Konwicki, Jerzy Skolimowski) and popular (Stanisław Bareja, Tadeusz Chmielewski, Stanisław Lenartowicz) cinema. The audience loved her: in a poll by *Express Wieczorny* for the most popular TV actor, she won the Silver Mask twice, in

---

extended version will be published in the volume edited by Magdalena Podsiadło and Sebastian Jagielski (Universitas 2017).

[2] See Anita Skwara, "Film Stars Do Not Shine in the Sky Over Poland. The Absence of Popular Cinema in Poland", in: *Popular European Cinema*, ed. Richard Dyer and Ginette Vincendeau (London: Routledge, 1992), pp. 220-231; Iwona Kurz, *Twarze w tłumie. Wizerunki bohaterów wyobraźni zbiorowej w kulturze polskiej lat 1955-1969 / Faces in the crowd. Images of the collective imagination protagonists in the Polish culture of 1955-1959*, (Warszawa: Świat Literacki) (2005); Ewa Mazierska, "Train to Hollywood: Polish Actresses in Foreign Films", in: *Polish Cinema in a Transnational Context*, ed. Ewa Mazierska and Michael Goddard (Rochester-New York: University of Rochester Press, 2014), pp. 153-173.

[3] Zbigniew Cybulski, "W stronę gwiazd" / "Towards the stars", interview by Stanisław Janicki, *Kino* 1 (1966), p. 47.

[4] Iza Komendołowicz, *Elka*, (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie) (2012), p. 149.

[5] Ibidem, p. 87.

1963 and 1964, and the Golden Mask in 1965. It seems, however, that Czyżewska's fairy-tale career did not come from nowhere. On one hand, talent, bravado, "go get it" energy, charisma and authenticity, and on the other, the embodiment of the "socialist" star type. The latter was defined—as in the Soviet Union—by social and national identity and opposition towards "bourgeois" Western identity.[6] Neither the decadent, eccentric, and sexy Kalina Jędrusik, nor the aristocratic and supercilious Beata Tyszkiewicz, and not even the delicate and mysterious Ewa Krzyżewska could have been promoted as "socialist stars". Czyżewska, whose beauty and background were emphasised as proletariat and Slavic, was to become the ideal embodiment of the "socialist object of desire". Czyżewska's body—used as a screen on which first the (socialist) desires and then (socialist) fears were projected—was placed almost from the beginning of her career in transnational contexts.[7] On one hand, it was the body of a lively Soviet woman soldier (*Gdzie jest generał?/Where is the General?*, 1963, Tadeusz Chmielewski), on the other, a Jew in love (*Niekochana/Unloved*, 1965, Janusz Nasfeter), a body for a Soviet pilot (*Przerwany lot/Interrupted Flight*, 1964, Leonard Buczkowski), an Italian (*Giuseppe w Warszawie/Giuseppe in Warsaw*, 1964, Stanisław Lenartowicz), and an Australian (but of Polish decent (*Żona dla Australijczyka/Wife for an Australian*, 1963, Stanisław Bareja)). Czyżewska, however, crossed borders not only on the screen: in 1965, she married *The New York Times* correspondent, David Halberstam, and left for New York, or rather was forced to leave. The star's previously ideal body suddenly appeared to be not for "strangers", but for "us", not outside the national community but inside it: a transgressive (since openly transnational) anti-body. It is true that the corporeality of transnational stars can sometimes be defined as foreign, since it causes fascination and/or fear, but these are the emotions we usually deal with—unlike in Czyżewska's case—outside the countries of their origin.[8]

[6] Oksana Bulgakova, "Gwiazdy i władza" / "Stars and authority", trans. Tadeusz Szczepański, *Kwartalnik Filmowy* 49-50 (2005), p. 49.

[7] Elizabeth Ezra, Terry Rowden, "General Introduction: What is Transnational Cinema?", in: *Transnational Cinema: The Film Reader*, ed. Elizabeth Ezra and Terry Rowden (New York: Routledge, 2006); Kathleen McHugh, „The World and the Soup: Historicizing Media Feminisms in Transnational Contexts", *Camera Obscura* 24: 3 (2009), pp. 111-151; Will Higbee, Song Hwee Lim, „Concepts of Transnational Cinema: Towards a Critical Transnationalism in Film Studies", *Transnational Cinemas* 1:1 (2010), pp. 7-21.

[8] Diane Negra, *Off-White Hollywood. American Culture and Ethnic Female Stardom*, (London-New York: Routledge) (2001), pp. 55-83; Dale Hudson, "Just Play Yourself, «Maggie Cheung»: Irma Vep, Rethinking Transnational Stardom and Unthinking National Cinemas", *Screen* 47:2 (2006), pp. 213-232.

"A modern girl"

Encouraged by the success of the contest for the lead actress in the comedy *Ewa chce spać/Ewa wants to sleep* (1957, Tadeusz Chmielewski), in 1958 the magazine *Film,* together with Zespół Autorów Filmowych, announced the action *Beautiful girls to the screens*, aimed, as critics at the time claimed, at fulfilling the shortage of young and beautiful girls on Polish screens.[9] When the filmmakers and journalists were looking for the Polish Brigitte Bardot, a popular teenager magazine *Filipinka* conducted a survey among its readers: *Are you a modern girl?* According to Małgorzata Fidelis this image reflects the "attempts to define the national and socialist identities in the post-war Polish society" and to "build a positive image of modernity in the communist version".[10] The genesis of the image of the "modern girl"[11] promoted by the media and officially supported by the party activists, similarly to the calls for a uniquely Polish film star, may be found in the political thaw that was accompanied to some extent by the social thaw.[12] Elżbieta Czyżewska was the result of this search. Aspiring "modern girls", *Filipinka* readers—who in this figure saw a young woman who preferred foreign travel to marriage, listened to rock'n'roll and was up to date with the fashion trends[13]—could identify with the disobedient, dynamic, sarcastic and ironic girls played by Czyżewska. Young Poles took her roles—Hanka from *Wife for an Australian*, Marysia from *Giuseppe in Warsaw*, or Joanna from *Małżeństwo z rozsądku/The Marriage of Convenience* (1966, Stanisław Bareja)—as their dream self-portrait. In fact, however, the star image of Czyżewska, which the girls copied so willingly, was full of contradictions. It could not have been any other way since they were trying to merge communist propaganda with the influence of Western pop culture. This "magical synthesis" of opposite values, on the one hand, reinforced and consolidated the system, and on the other undermined and destabilised it.[14]

Czyżewska's enthusiasm and charm were used to create the ideal "socialist object of desire". This image was set to serve the ideology in two ways: firstly, they tried unsuccessfully to transform Czyżewska into a Soviet-style star; secondly, she embodied Polish-Soviet love when acting in Polish-Soviet romances. According to

[9] Iwona Kurz, *Twarze w tłumie*…, pp. 119-126.

[10] Małgorzata Fidelis, "Czy jesteś nowoczesną dziewczyną? Młode Polki a kultura konsumpcyjna w latach 60." / "Are You a Modern Girl? Consumer Culture and Young Women in 1960s Poland", trans. Anna Rogulska, *Teksty Drugie* 2 (2015), p. 306, 321.

[11] According to Iwona Kurz, the term "girl" was commonly used in everyday speech in the 50s. This word drove out the more popular terms as "miss" or "friend" (Iwona Kurz, *Twarze w tłumie*…, p. 125).

[12] Ibidem, p. 119.

[13] Małgorzata Fidelis, pp. 303-306.

[14] Richard Dyer wrote about the Hollywood "star system" that the star images recalling the social meanings and values reveal, solve, integrate or disguise the ideological contradictions present in a given society and culture (Richard Dyer, *Stars*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan) (1998), pp. 20-32).

Oksana Bulgakova, female stars such as Lyubov Orlova in the Soviet Union "were burdened with the promotion of behaviours appropriate for men" ("crosswise identification").[15] Female characters were considered both a visual attraction, the object of glances, and the active "ideal ego". The splendour and charm typical of female characters in classical Hollywood cinema were in the Soviet cinema transformed into activity and social optimism, and sexual energy, as in classical sublimation, was translated to work. "Not being either a pin-up star, or Madonna, the star has to function as an energy engine, a stimulus to act".[16] By analogy, Marysia from *Giuseppe in Warsaw*, a resistance activist for whom the Cause will stop at nothing, is unlike her brother Staszek, who does not care about the war at all. Both he and Giuseppe, a fugitive from the Italian army, are very good in the kitchen while the girl bravely fights the German enemy. Thus, both female and male spectators could identify with Czyżewska's brave characters. As Iwona Kurz wrote, Czyżewska's characters—Marysia from *Giuseppe in Warsaw*, Marusia from *Where is the General?* and Hanka from *Wife for an Australian*—fulfil the romantic model of "knight-lover who places his homeland above love"; however, this model in the new political situation was to serve the socialist education.[17]

Some films with Czyżewska that praised Polish-Soviet love by merging the national and sexual discourses had a propaganda function. In the melodrama *Interrupted Flight*, which is set in two periods, during WWII and 17 years later, her character, Urszula, falls in love with a Soviet pilot, Vovka, whom she gives a medallion—a valuable token of Polish national mythology. This prop becomes a symbolic confirmation of the friendly relations between the Poles and the Soviets. However, this friendship is clearly streaked by Polish inferiority: the educated and handsome Russian is an elegant pilot while "Sokół", whom Urszula marries after the war, is a neglected postman-alcoholic who for years has hidden from his wife the letters from Vovka. The superiority of the Russians and the inferiority of the Poles are also visible in the comedy *Where is the General?*, in which the Pole is impulsive, carefree and likes to booze, while the Soviet female soldier, Marusia, is charming, hardworking and reliable. Even though the Pole calls her a "witch" and "gendarme worse than Hitler", she will still love him. The film ends with their long kiss, which is observed with enthusiasm by the soldiers of both friendly armies.[18] It could seem that the Polish-Soviet alliance was written on the actress's body.

Importantly, Marysia from *Giuseppe in Warsaw*, Marusia from *Where is the General?*, and Hanka from *Wife for an Australian* do not resemble the female "machines full of energy and optimism" from the Soviet films or Polish socialist realistic films. Paradoxically, they are closer to Doris Day's "girls from the neighbourhood" who eagerly fulfil their duties. First, they fight the "parasites" in

[15] Oksana Bulgakova, p. 47.
[16] Ibidem, p. 56.
[17] Iwona Kurz, *Twarzę w tłumie* …, p. 139, 142.
[18] Allegedly Elżbieta Czyżewska was ashamed to have appeared in this film (Iza Komendołowicz, p. 143).

order to fall in love with them finally. For example in the film by Bareja, a rich Pole from Australia comes back home to buy a wife. However, Hanka, who he falls in love with, kidnaps, and holds prisoner in a villa (seen by Poles as a consumerist heaven), not only is not an easy trophy (intelligent, ironic, rational), but convinces the prodigal son to stay in Poland after the marriage. Initially, like Day's characters, she is unsentimental and factual but later falls prey to the advances of the "erotically obsessed" "parasite". She throws away the costume of the Mazowsze Group where she sings and transforms into a chic dame from a "bourgeois" film: low-cut fitted dress, white gloves, high heels, and a flower in her hair.

According to Miriam Hansen, the popularity of American cinema on foreign (Soviet) ground was not about "*what* these films showed, what they brought into optical consciousness, as it were, but the way they opened up hitherto unperceived modes of sensory perception and experience"[19]. The comedies with Czyżewska, these escapist and compensatory fantasies, proved to be so attractive for audiences not only because they offered an antidote to the sombreness of the period of "little stabilisation", but also because they showed new energy, new corporeality and sensuality, provided guidelines how to be modern in the modernising (socialist) reality. Her girls recalled the emancipating "new woman" from the 30s, in the West symbolising "the deepest fears related to modernity".[20] Marysia, Hanka, or Joanna from *The Marriage of Convenience* will initially find their emancipation as "modern women" in tight blouses and short skirts, in activity and freedom (mixing of sexual roles), in playing with their corporeality and sexuality. Marysia, in order to get the Italian's gun, will not hesitate to use her sex appeal; hence, she is taken for a prostitute, first by Giuseppe and then by the Germans.

However, the authorities' support for the image of "the queen of the 60s"[21]—to recall the words of Andrzej Łapicki—falls to pieces when Elżbieta Czyżewska marries an "American with a Pulitzer". In April 1965, Halberstam published in *The New York Times* a text about common and state-supported anti-Semitism in Poland. A few months later the same newspaper published his article about Poland as an "exceptionally pro-Western" nation, about alienated Polish society and the communist party which "even 20 years after the war, when it was established in the country by the triumphant Red Army, is weak internally".[22] The reactions were quick to come: texts condemning Halberstam first appeared in *Kultura*, *Zycie Warszawy*, *Trybuna Ludu*, and *Stolica*, and at the beginning of 1966 he was placed on the list of restricted persons. After her husband left, Czyżewska was questioned and continuously followed. In the end, the authorities decided that her stay in the

[19] Miriam Bratu Hansen, "The mass production of the senses: classical cinema as vernacular modernism", in: *Reinventing Film Studies*, ed. Christine Gledhill and Linda Williams (London: Arnold, 2000), p. 344.
[20] Małgorzata Fidelis, p. 321.
[21] Iza Komendołowicz, p. 30.
[22] Filip Gańczak, *Filmowcy w matni bezpieki / The filmmakers in the snare of the Security Service*, (Warszawa: Prószyński i S-ka) (2011), p. 75.

country "was impossible"[23], even when she decided to divorce the journalist. In 1968, in order to act in *Wszystko na sprzedaż/Everything for Sale* (1968, Andrzej Wajda), Czyżewska came from the United States and became a victim of an anti-Semitic witch-hunt even before filming started.

In the press she was attacked as a "traitor" ("(...) why does our outstanding Polish actress betray our crucial, Polish interest?"[24]), as the wife of a "Jewish imperialist", wife of the author of "horrible lampoons about our country" who "slandered (…) our nation". Moreover, in April 1968 Włodzimierz Stępiński published an open letter to Andrzej Wajda in *Walka Młodych* demanding Czyżewska's removal from his film.[25] "Disgusting" texts by Halberstam caused Halberstam himself to become "disgusting" and he later infected his wife, since what is "disgusting" is sticky and viscid.[26] Sara Ahmed argued, "to name something as disgusting (…) is a performative. (…) But to say something is disgusting is still to «make something»; it generates a set of effects, which then adhere as a disgusting object".[27] Since the actress was called a "traitor" and was associated with what is "disgusting" (for the "Polish nation"), she had to recognise her social definition: "recognise her place in the position of subordination".[28] It was precisely the refusal to accept this position of subordination from which Elka from *Everything for Sale* was born, a film in which Czyżewska—benefiting from the protection of the film's fiction—"is" herself.

In Wajda's film the actress acts like never before. She is hysterical, theatrical and at the same time authentic. As in the legendary scene of the dance at the banquet, in which she bites her lower lip and continues in lonely abandon. The director saw this dynamic dance at a Warsaw party—the dance being her "protest against the entire company—and decided to include it in his film.[29] This dance is a protest and "the intention of the protest is (…) «to disturb the spectacle» played, metaphorically speaking, on the main scene, to introduce to the field of vision the

[23] Ibidem, p. 88.

[24] Aleksandra Szarłat, *Celebryci z tamtych lat. Prywatne życie wielkich gwiazd PRL-u / Celebrities of the past. Private lives of great stars in PPR*, (Kraków: Znak) (2014), p. 272.

[25] Włodzimierz Stępiński, "Do reżysera Andrzeja Wajdy list otwarty" / "An open letter to the director Andrzej Wajda", *Kwartalnik Filmowy* 6 (1994), p. 225 (*Walka Młodych* 14.04.1968, p. 1, 10).

[26] According to Sara Ahmed "it is not that an object we might encounter is inherently disgusting; rather, an object becomes disgusting through its contact with other objects that have already, as it were, been designated as disgusting before the encounter has taken place" (Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press) (2004), p. 87).

[27] Ibidem, p. 93.

[28] "We do things with language, produce effects with language, (...). Language is (...) both «what» we do (...), the act and its consequences" (Judith Butler, *Excitable Speech. A Politics of the Performative*, (New York-London: Routledge) (1997), p. 8).

[29] Andrzej Wajda, *Autobiografia. Kino i reszta świata / Autobiography. Cinema and the rest of the world*, (Kraków: Znak) (2013), p. 119.

new performative language which disturbs and damages the previous one".[30] Czyżewska's performance, being an act of disobedience and insubordination, an act of freedom, can be seen as a narrative excess. It is delivered for the public gathered at a banquet (and in the screening room). The director emphasises the performance, on the one hand, by recording envious glances, faces and grimaces from the drawing room, and on the other, by using zooms—popular at the time—thanks to which the actress's face can suddenly get closer (desire) and move away equally fast (rejection). The movement of the lens reflects something from the group's reaction to Czyżewska's unreserved expression: they revel in the fascinating and exciting images ("she looked great (…), at the time between the West [and] Poland there was a precipice, it came like from another world"[31]), and at the same time isolate, mock, exclude and stigmatise. Wajda's film, obviously, does not mention "Halberstam's case", thanks to which the audience's entire attention focuses on the film and theatre circles, since Czyżewska was ostracised long before she left Poland. As one Security Service informer reports, already in mid-1965 "in theatre all actors and employees surrounded her with a wall of condemnation. They do not speak about her otherwise than «this bitch»".[32] Just as if Halberstam was merely a pretext for revenge for the fact that "she overshadowed (…) other actresses".[33] Andrzej Wajda let her take symbolic revenge in his film. At dawn, a drunk and jolly elite goes on a carousel started by Elka. With satisfaction, she watches as the "artists" shout, curse, and then freeze like dummies. They become living corpses.

Due to the smear campaign in the press, even before the end of filming *Everything for Sale*, Czyżewska received a warrant to leave Poland immediately. What is more, at the airport she had to undergo a humiliating body search. She was treated as (transnational) waste expelled by the national body, excluded beyond its borders. She symbolised everything that in the period of the "March events" proved to be politically most suspected: she married an American of Jewish origin, thus becoming part of the anti-Zionist and anti-American obsessive propaganda of 1968. She also became suspicious as a symbol of a "modern girl", which at the time had become politically involved, associated with the consumerist culture of the capitalist West ("the era of bust ended, (…) of bust according to Lollobrigida's standards", wrote a critic in *Walka Młodych*[34]). It is important that the attack on Czyżewska in *Walka Młodych* was preceded by the publication of the text *Who we do not want to be*, which mocked the *Beautiful girls to the screens* action and condemned the promoters of the "modern girl" notion. "Slowly, the criticism of misunderstood

[30] Iwona Kurz, "Między chrztem a samospaleniem. «Teatra polskie» drugiej połowy lat sześćdziesiątych" / "Between baptism and self-immolation. «Polish theatres» of the second half of the sixties", *Didaskalia* 126 (2015), p. 4.
[31] Iza Komendołowicz, pp. 222-223.
[32] Filip Gańczak, p. 63.
[33] Ibidem, s. 71.
[34] "Jakimi nie chcemy być" / "What we do not want to be", *Walka Młodych* 28.01.1968, p. 8. Quoted after: Małgorzata Fidelis, p. 318.

modernity", wrote Małgorzata Fidelis, "transforms into an attack on intellectual and artistic elites which allegedly were responsible for the promotion of Western trends among the young".[35] From here, it is only one step to the so-called anti-Zionist campaign since "similarly to the supporters of the modern girl, also the Polish Jews—the alleged Zionists plotting against the socialist Poland—were slandered (…) as agents of Western imperialism".[36] In the image of the "modern girl", nobody looked any more for what was socialist, but what was foreign and threatening for the socialist reality (consumerism and sex).

However, this no longer referred to Czyżewska. "Our" girl, who not long ago had embodied Polish-Soviet love, chose the West, "a Western imperialist". We are dealing here with the "erotic betrayal of authority". The authority seems to be a jealous lover who punishes the faithless for infidelity. It comes as no surprise when we realise what role the stars played in the Soviet Union where "the relation between the stars and authority were a part of the traditional patriarchal model". Tatyana Okunevskaya and Zoya Fyodorova were sent to camps for flirting with foreigners. After the screening of *Volga-Volga* (1938), Stalin was to warn Grigori Aleksandrov, the director and husband of Orlova, "he will lose his head if anything happens to these legs".[37] The legs of Orlova, of course. Jean Baudrillard in *Seduction* asks, "Is one only seeking to avenge the spell that the other exercises over you?"[38] Elżbieta Czyżewska had to pay for flirting with authority and the audience; the latter is always happy to watch the falls of those who charmed it.

The loss of aura

The American stage of Elżbieta Czyżewska's career became sexualised and associated with *destrudo*. In the 60s, she offered the will to live, refreshing irony, and distance; however, since the 80s she has been associated solely with general decline, defeat, decomposition, and weakness. First, excess (of energy, talent, and success); later, a lack (of energy, talent, success). Her body—damaged by alcohol and drugs—is transformed both by the actress and by the audience of her shows into body-scandal, body-excess. Two memories illustrate this diagnosis well.

(1) In a documentary about Czyżewska, *Aktorka/Actress* (2015, Kinga Dębska, Maria Konwicka), Adam Holender describes an event that took place when she was still married to Halberstam: during a lavish party taking place at their house the actress "undressed completely in the kitchen and ran through the crowd of friends. Everybody was speechless. Everybody understood it since it was at the time in

[35] Małgorzata Fidelis, p. 318.
[36] Ibidem.
[37] Oksana Bulgakova, p. 56.
[38] Jean Baudrillard, *Seduction*, trans. Brian Singer, (Montréal: New World Perspectives) (1990), p. 124.

Vogue, but nobody knew that something like this could happen in a living room. David really enjoyed it". From Holender's perspective, we are not dealing with a non-conformist performance, but indecent albeit interesting excess. Excluded from acting, Czyżewska transforms her life in transgressive theatre; however, the living room—especially from a Polish perspective—is not an appropriate place to stage (and undress) oneself.

(2) The memories from the time when Czyżewska was already divorced are even more marked with sexuality on the one hand, and bourgeois indignation on the other:

> She did things (…)—said Dorota Stalińska who met Czyżewska on set of *Debiutantka/Debutante* (1981, dir. Barbara Sass)—unworthy of a woman, actress, artist. Everybody froze with fear. And it was like this was what she wanted. She wanted to be the centre of attention at any price. Passionately stripping her wrinkled body in public (…). I was terribly embarrassed by this behaviour (…)[39].

Stalińska speaks about Czyżewska's old "wrinkled" body even though the actress was only 43 at the time. The recollections of her compatriots about Czyżewska on emigration share one thing: embarrassment.[40] Shame is the reaction to her exhibitionism, her open corporeality. As in the scene from the banquet of *Debutante*: drunk architect Maria (played by Czyżewska) gives herself to a random man before the guests and Ewa, who is embarrassed for the woman, tries to separate them, causing Maria's hysterical spasms and aggression. Monika Talarczyk-Gubała noticed that this scene resembles Elka's rebellious dance from *Everything for Sale* (in Sass's film, as in Wajda's, the actress dances in the presence of the Master, played again by Andrzej Łapicki). That dynamic and rebellious performance, however, contained freedom and resistance, while here in the author's opinion we are dealing only with "embarrassing masochism". Wajda watched Elżbieta with admiration while Sass's look is cold, ruthless, without a shadow of compassion.[41] It seems that this look is only full of sadistic satisfaction derived from exposing a female body, distorted in hysterical spasm, for public view (spectators during the banquet and in the screening room). However, Czyżewska's performances in life and in the cinema cannot be easily frozen. Ignoring one's embarrassment embarrasses the spectators (Holender, Stalińska, Ewa, the character in *Debutante*), imposing on the embarrassed woman the position of subordination (lascivious

[39] Iza Komendołowicz, p. 235.

[40] Meryl Streep who – as a student – performed with her in *Demons* directed by Andrzej Wajda sees a completely different shade of Czyżewska's excesses: "this creature [Czyżewska] seemed to me the most fascinating woman I have ever met. She had this European style that I have not known since I grew up in New Jersey. This was femininity aware of itself, truly seductive (…), a style unknown to women in the 70s." (soundtrack from the film *Actress*).

[41] Monika Talarczyk-Gubała, *Wszystko o Ewie. Filmy Barbary Sass a kino kobiet w drugiej połowie XX wieku / All about Eve. Barbara Sass's films and women's cinema in the 2nd half of the XX century*, (Szczecin: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Szczecińskiego) (2013), pp. 193-198.

lunatic, alcoholic ending up in gutter, vulgar hysteric, etc.). Czyżewska's performances might be an attempt to reverse the traumatising mechanisms of embarrassment. They may also be an attempt to turn the shame into power. As in the masturbation-related episode of the popular series *Sex and the City* (1999, Daniel Algrant), where Czyżewska played the role of a sexologist in her 60s lecturing by the sweat of her brow on the secrets of tantric sex, she masturbates her husband and the emancipated New Yorkers dutifully take notes.

Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick and Adam Frank, when analysing the works of Silvan Tomkins, noted that there is no shame and disgust without a positive, pleasant affection:

> these affects produce bodily knowledges: disgust, as when spitting out bad-tasting food, recognizes the difference between inside and outside the body and what should and should not be let in; shame as precarious hyperreflexivity of the surface of the body can turn one inside out—or outside in.[42]

The affection of disgust and shame that were a reaction to Czyżewska's transnational body emphasise the closeness of the body that was rejected, "vomited". According to Sara Ahmed, vomiting "involves expelling something that has already been digested, and hence incorporated into the body of the one who feels disgust".[43] This mechanism characterises well the encounters between her compatriots and Czyżewska in New York: from closeness to distance. What was close becomes problematic, unsafe, disgusting. Hence, one has to move away. As did Janusz Głowacki after the Broadway success of the play *Hunting Cockroaches* on which he worked with Czyżewska; Agnieszka Osiecka after publication of *White Blouse* inspired by her letters; Joanna Pacuła and—a moment later—Yurek Bogayevicz.

Nobody doubted that the title character of *Anna* (1987) by Bogayevicz "was" Elżbieta Czyżewska. Neither the film's scriptwriter, Agnieszka Holland, the actress's friends ("the main character is exactly like Elżbieta"[44]), the author of *The Real "Anna": The Truth Behind the Hit Film*, nor Czyżewska herself admitted that the director "stole her life".[45] The actress told Bogayevicz the story of her meeting with Joanna Pacuła, and he promised her that she would play the lead role in the film based on this story. Czyżewska was probably hoping to repeat and expand the strategy from *Everything for Sale*: again, she would be herself before the camera. The director, however, quickly backed out of his promise, casting Sally Kirkland as the main character who won the Golden Globe for this role and an Oscar

[42] Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, Adam Frank, „Shame in the Cybernetic Fold: Reading Silvan Tomkins", in: Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling. Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity*, (Durham-London: Duke University Press) (2003), p. 116.
[43] Sara Ahmed, p. 94.
[44] Iza Komendołowicz, p. 198.
[45] Ellen Hopkins, "The Real *Anna*: The Truth Behind the Hit Film", *New York Magazine* 4.01.1988, pp. 24-29.

nomination.[46] She plays the former greatest star of the communist Czechoslovakia, Anna, who played in almost all films produced there. However, in New York, where she went—or in fact, like Czyżewska, was forced to go in 1968—nobody remembers her former successes. This situation is quickly noticed by a young Czechoslovakian actress, Krystyna, who goes there without money or a place to stay, but with Anna's photos from the times of her greatness. The latter, living in a tenement house in Manhattan and playing episodes on Broadway, takes the girl in and helps her find her way in this new reality. Krystyna quickly becomes successful, "borrowing" Anna's dramatic life story (childhood in orphanage, political reasons for emigration, etc.) as well as her boyfriend.[47]

The film mostly seems important due to one short, surprising, and disturbing scene. After Krystyna's "betrayal", the disappointed and frustrated Anna appears in the cinema in mourning clothes: a black scarf on her head and dark glasses hiding her tearful eyes. In the cinema, the atmosphere is quite different: they are just showing a comedy with Anna in the lead (a black and white film that seems to be stylised on *Where is the General?*). The woman confronts her own reflection, as if she were looking in the mirror, and she cannot take her eyes off the screen. The location of the projector, audience and screen, the darkness in the screening room and the stream of moving images cause the spectator to fall "into a trance-like state"[48]. Anna is enchanted by what she sees. She identifies with her own (lost) reflection, and this is a source of narcissistic pleasure. "She dissolves" in the image because this image allows her to retrieve her own subjectivity which was taken from her, appropriated by another actress. The body of Anna-the-spectator that is reflected on screen (idealised) gives a settling sense of calm and safety; however, this affective moment does not last long. From the state of illusion—a narcissistic trance caused by the soothing images—the protagonist is woken by the sight of her huge face (close-up) eaten by fire. The narration freezes, and we, the spectators, watch the frightened face of the actress and her celluloid, disappearing copy. Especially disturbing is a brief—as from a horror film—close-up of the actress's silent scream, as if she were already dead.[49] This is the moment of the dramatic crack: Anna, who is still looking for mirror reflections, her own doppelgangers

[46] According to Agnieszka Holland, Czyżewska herself was the reason why "this film could not have been done with her." She behaved like Anna, she was self-destructive, aggressive, plunging into an alcohol delirium, as if aware that "the film was stealing her life" (Iza Komendołowicz, p. 269).

[47] Joanna Pacuła already in 1983, i.e. only one year after coming to New York played the lead role – thanks to Roman Polański's recommendation – in *Gorky Park* (1983, Michael Apted) for which she was nominated for the Golden Globe. Those who witnessed the meeting between these two actresses claim that "Elżbieta was jealous, mainly because Pacuła was young, very energetic and quickly successful" (Ibidem, p. 198).

[48] Thomas Elsaesser, Malte Hagener, *Film Theory. An Introduction through the senses*, (New York-London: Routledge) (2010), p. 68.

[49] Paul Coates wrote about the relation between the close-up and suffering: "[...] the close-up, whose most common form picks out the face, isolates as suffering does" (Paul Coates, *Screening the Face*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan) (2012), p. 46).

(Krystyna being one, the one who managed to escape), thought she had found herself again in the cinema (narcissistic satisfaction). However, the reflection on the screen appears to be a phantom, an apparition that disappears at the same time, thereby revealing the emptiness.

"At the height of her success in Poland the actress stopped being «Elżbieta Czyżewska»", wrote a critic in *Film*.[50] Bogayevicz aptly caught what was the essence of her American period: the loss of star aura and the refusal to accept it, already indicated in *Everything for Sale*. The greatest star of the Polish cinema of the 60s says directly to the camera, "Why nobody loves me? (…) Let everybody love me". In Wajda's film, however, we see the star's splendour, but in Bogayevicz's only despair. In the both nostalgic and sadistic cinema scene from *Anna* there is, on one hand, satisfaction, pleasure, and happiness stemming from peregrinations on time lost, and on the other, pain, alienation, lack, and loss. Unfortunately, no magical process of finding oneself, coming back to oneself, is going to take place here. The actress's celluloid face consumed by fire symbolises the end of her star aura, and the close-up of her silent scream helps to "arrest time's flow on the edge of its waterfall's onrush to trauma".[51] Richard Dyer, in analysing Judy Garland's loss of glamour that constituted her image, noted that this loss means defeat, primarily in playing one's sexual role, in the field of femininity.[52] For that reason, perhaps, Elżbieta Czyżewska "needed to feel a star [so much]. She had to know that she had been a star in Poland"[53], even though in her own country—as a journalist of *The New York Times* wrote after her death—she was not welcome.[54] The national body transformed into a transnational one, which does not accept the position of subordination imposed on it by its compatriots, becomes disgusting in order to become expelled beyond the borders of the national community. Thus, the transnational body becomes marked as anti-body even though—or maybe because—not long ago it was worshipped and loved.

Translated by Amalia Woźna

[50] Krzysztof Demidowicz, "Elżbieta Czyżewska: kochana niekochana" / "Elżbieta Czyżewska: loved unloved", *Film* 6 (2001), p. 93.
[51] P. Coates, p. 52.
[52] Richard Dyer, *Heavenly Bodies. Film Stars and Society*, (London-New York: Routledge) (2004), p. 163.
[53] Statement of Kinga Dębska comes from the materials promoting the documentary she co-directed: "*Actress". The premiere of the film "Actress" (documentary about Elżbieta Czyżewska)*, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uLPPAMFyBNM,dateaccessed 21 March 2016.
[54] Bruce Weber, "Elzbieta Czyzewska, Polish Actress Unwelcome in Her Own Country, Diesat 72", *The New York Times* 10.06.2010, http://www.nytimes.com/2010/06/18/arts/18czyz.html?_r=0,dateaccessed: 21 March 2016.

References

Ahmed Sara, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press) (2004).

Baudrillard Jean, *Seduction*, trans. Brian Singer, (Montréal: New World Perspectives) (1990).

Bratu Hansen Miriam, "The mass production of the senses: classical cinema as vernacular modernism", in: *Reinventing Film Studies*, ed. Christine Gledhill and Linda Williams (London: Arnold) (2000).

Bulgakova Oksana, "Gwiazdy i władza" / "Stars and authority", trans. Tadeusz Szczepański, *Kwartalnik Filmowy* 49-50 (2005).

Butler Judith, *Excitable Speech. A Politics of the Performative*, (New York-London: Routledge) (1997).

Coates Paul, *Screening the Face*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan) (2012).

Cybulski Zbigniew, "W stronę gwiazd" / "Towards the stars", interview by Stanisław Janicki, *Kino* 1 (1966).

Demidowicz Krzysztof, "Elżbieta Czyżewska: kochana niekochana" / "Elżbieta Czyżewska: loved unloved", *Film* 6 (2001).

Dyer Richard, *Heavenly Bodies. Film Stars and Society*, (London-New York: Routledge) (2004).

Dyer Richard, *Stars*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan) (1998).

Elsaesser Thomas, Hagener Malte, *Film Theory. An Introduction through the senses*, (New York-London: Routledge) (2010).

Ezra Elizabeth, Terry Rowden, "General Introduction: What is Transnational Cinema?", in: *Transnational Cinema: The Film Reader*, ed. Elizabeth Ezra and Terry Rowden (New York: Routledge) (2006).

Fidelis Małgorzata, "Czy jesteś nowoczesną dziewczyną? Młode Polki a kultura konsumpcyjna w latach 60." / "Are You a Modern Girl? Consumer Culture and Young Women in 1960s Poland", trans. Anna Rogulska, *Teksty Drugie* 2 (2015).

Gańczak Filip, *Filmowcy w matni bezpieki / The filmmakers in the snare of the Security Service*, (Warszawa: Prószyński i S-ka) (2011).

Higbee Will, Song Hwee Lim, „Concepts of Transnational Cinema: Towards a Critical Transnationalism in Film Studies", *Transnational Cinemas* 1:1 (2010).

Hopkins Ellen, "The Real *Anna*: The Truth Behind the Hit Film", *New York Magazine* 4.01.1988.

Hudson Dale, "Just Play Yourself, «Maggie Cheung»: Irma Vep, Rethinking Transnational Stardom and Unthinking National Cinemas", *Screen* 47:2 (2006).

Komendołowicz Iza, *Elka*, (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie) (2012).

Kosofsky Sedgwick Eve, Adam Frank, „Shame in the Cybernetic Fold: Reading Silvan Tomkins", in: Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling. Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity*, (Durham-London: Duke University Press) (2003).

Kurz Iwona, "Między chrztem a samospaleniem. «Teatra polskie» drugiej połowy lat sześćdziesiątych" / "Between baptism and self-immolation. «Polish theatres» of the second half of the sixties", *Didaskalia* 126 (2015).

Kurz Iwona, *Twarze w tłumie. Wizerunki bohaterów wyobraźni zbiorowej w kulturze polskiej lat 1955-1969 / Faces in the crowd. Images of the collective imagination protagonists in the Polish culture of 1955-1959*, (Warszawa: Świat Literacki) (2005).

Mazierska Ewa, "Train to Hollywood: Polish Actresses in Foreign Films", in: *Polish Cinema in a Transnational Context*, ed. Ewa Mazierska and Michael Goddard (Rochester-New York: University of Rochester Press) (2014).

McHugh Kathleen, „The World and the Soup: Historicizing Media Feminisms in Transnational Contexts", *Camera Obscura* 24: 3 (2009).

Negra Diane, *Off-White Hollywood. American Culture and Ethnic Female Stardom*, (London-New York: Routledge) (2001).

Skwara Anita, "Film Stars Do Not Shine in the Sky Over Poland. The Absence of Popular Cinema in Poland", in: *Popular European Cinema*, ed. Richard Dyer and Ginette Vincendeau (London: Routledge) (1992).

Stępiński Włodzimierz, "Do reżysera Andrzeja Wajdy list otwarty" / "An open letter to the director Andrzej Wajda", *Kwartalnik Filmowy* 6 (1994).

Szarłat Aleksandra, *Celebryci z tamtych lat. Prywatne życie wielkich gwiazd PRL-u / Celebrities of the past. Private lives of great stars in PPR*, (Kraków: Znak) (2014).

Talarczyk-Gubała Monika, *Wszystko o Ewie. Filmy Barbary Sass a kino kobiet w drugiej połowie XX wieku / All about Eve. Barbara Sass's films and women's cinema in the 2nd half of the XX century*, (Szczecin: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Szczecińskiego) (2013).

Wajda Andrzej, *Autobiografia. Kino i reszta świata / Autobiography. Cinema and the rest of the world*, (Kraków: Znak) (2013).

Weber Bruce, "Elzbieta Czyzewska, Polish Actress Unwelcome in Her Own Country, Diesat 72", *The New York Times* 10.06.2010, http://www.nytimes.com/2010/06/18/arts/18czyz.html?_r=0,dateaccessed: 21 March 2016.